TOK Item Exhibition Discussion

1. Find an appropriate TOK "object" that is related to **ANY** of the course content and be prepared to lead a 5-10 minute discussion on those relationships. Upload to the shared Google Drive folder a summary of your discussion before you present (MUST be less than 900 words)

What are TOK Objects?

An extremely wide variety of different types of objects are suitable for use in a TOK exhibition. Students are encouraged to choose objects that are of personal interest and that they have come across in their academic studies and/or their lives beyond the classroom. The specific real-world context of each object is extremely important. It is, therefore, important that students identify specific objects to discuss rather than using generic objects and generic images from the internet. For example, a discussion and photograph of a student's baby brother is an example of an object that has a specific real-world context, whereas a generic image of "a baby" from an internet image search is not.
Examples of the diverse kinds of objects students could select include the following.

- A tweet from the President of the United States
- An image of the painting *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso
- The student's own extended essay (EE)
- A basketball used by the student during their physical education lessons
- The graphic novel *The Colour of Earth* by Kim Dong Hwa
- A painting that the student created in their DP visual arts course
- A refillable water bottle provided to each student in a school as part of a sustainability initiative
- A news article from the popular website *Buzzfeed*
- A photograph of the student playing in an orchestra

TOK COURSE CONTENT GENERAL OVERVIEW

Areas of Knowledge (5)

History: Studying history involves exploration and inquiry into the past. This raises questions about whether it is possible to talk meaningfully about a historical fact, or how far we can speak with certainty about anything in the past. History provides particularly interesting material for TOK discussions because of the challenges presented by not being able to directly observe the past, and because the historian is unable to utilize some of the methods of inquiry that are used in other areas of knowledge. Studying history can also promote empathy with, and understanding of, people living in diverse places and at different times. These characteristics open up many interesting issues and questions that are unique, or particularly pertinent, to history as an area of knowledge.

Human sciences: The human sciences include a diverse range of disciplines, such as psychology, social and cultural anthropology, economics, political science, and geography. These disciplines share a common focus on the study of human existence and behaviour. The diversity of the disciplines included within the human sciences can itself be a stimulus for interesting TOK discussions, as can the coexistence of different approaches within a single discipline (for example psychodynamic versus behaviourist versus humanistic approaches in psychology).

Natural sciences The natural sciences are often seen to rely on evidence, rationality and the quest for deeper understanding. Observation and experimentation play a key role, and terms such as “theory” have a special meaning in the natural sciences compared to how they are used in daily life and in other areas of knowledge. A focus for discussions of the natural sciences could be what differentiates the scientific from the non- scientific or “pseudoscientific”. Many people would suggest that it is the methods used in the natural sciences that is the key distinguishing factor—which raises the question of what it is about these methods that means that the knowledge they generate is often regarded as being highly reliable. Students could also consider whether the word “science” means different things in different languages, or whether it has been used differently in different periods of history.

Arts: The arts” is used in TOK to include a diverse range of disciplines such as visual arts, theatre, dance, music, film and literature. The forms and methods of these disciplines are often dissimilar, so the diversity within this single area of knowledge can itself be an excellent stimulus for TOK discussions. The arts provide rich material for discussions of concepts such as interpretation. For example, students could consider how we ascribe meaning to works of art, or whether the intention of the artist is what determines meaning. During these discussions, students could be encouraged to draw on their experiences from their DP studies in language and literature classes, where they are required to understand and interpret a range of texts.

Mathematics: knowledge or is seen to be founded on a set of more or less universally accepted definitions and basic assumptions. This makes mathematics an excellent source of material for TOK discussions. One interesting focus for discussions could be the status of mathematics as an area of knowledge. Students could consider why disciplines in the human sciences are often keen to cast their conclusions in mathematical terms, or why mathematical treatments of a topic are often taken by many to be a sign of intellectual rigour. They could also consider why mathematics is often given a privileged position in many education systems.

Core theme (1)

Knowledge & the Knower- This theme encourages careful and critical consideration of claims, provoking students to reflect on how we distinguish between claims that are contestable and claims that are not. It highlights the importance of not simply accepting claims at face value, and then explores how this can be reconciled with a recognition that many situations require us to make decisions without possessing absolute certainty. The core theme has been explicitly designed to provide rich opportunities for teachers and students to make links to the IB learner profile. Students are encouraged to consider both the power and the limitations of the tools that they have at their disposal as knowers and thinkers, and to become more aware of their own biases and assumptions. They could also consider what it really means to be open-minded or consider the importance of caring about how knowledge is used and controlled.

Optional Themes (2)

Knowledge and technology: This optional theme focuses on issues relating to the impact of technology on knowledge and knowers, and how technology helps and hinders our pursuit of knowledge. It examines the ways that technology can be seen to shape knowledge creation, knowledge sharing and exchange, and even the nature of knowledge itself. This theme provides an opportunity for students to engage with highly topical and engaging issues, such as those relating to the impact of artificial intelligence on knowledge and knowing. For example, there could be discussion of whether humans are needed to create new knowledge; whether machines can know, think or learn; or whether a knower is always human.

Knowledge and politics: This theme provides an opportunity for discussions about the practice of politics and our everyday interactions with politics in the world around us. For example, this theme is intended to provide an opportunity to engage with high-profile contemporary debates and examples, such as those around "fake news" and "post-truth politics". It considers where our political views and values come from, and how these inform and influence other areas of our lives. It encourages students to consider the role and origin of their own political beliefs and positions, as well as exploring issues relating to how groups make decisions that affect large numbers of people. Another key focus of this theme is the "politics of knowledge" and issues around knowledge, power and oppression. This could, for example, include discussion of the concept of "epistemic injustice" and situations where someone's knowledge or expertise may be dismissed because they are a member of a particular social group. It could also include exploration of examples relating to the control of knowledge; for example, cases where political leaders and groups (such as the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia) have attempted to eradicate specific bodies of knowledge, "rewrite" history or persecute educated elites.

Sources and types of knowledge

A Summary of the Types and Sources of Knowledge

Type of knowledge	*Source of knowledge*	*Characteristics (subjects)*
Empirical	Sense data, observation, experiment	Physical and Social Sciences
Rational	Reasoning	Logic, mathematics
Pragmatism	Experience	Sciences, attitude, method
Mystical	Intuition	Religion, metaphysics
Revealed	Sacred Books, Prophets, Gurus	Certain religions
Authority	Someone else	Most subjects

Knowledge claims

Rational Claims

These claims are steps in rational thinking, such as $x^2 + x = x(x + 1)$. They are justified by reasoning, and tested for consistency within a system by the coherence truth test.

Empirical/Observational Claims

Statements about what we can observe through our sense perception and through technologically extended perception. The claims are justified by observation and tested by further observation, using the correspondence truth test.

Value Claims/Judgments

These are claims with evaluations on a scale that is not calibrated in units. Unless the claim is put in observational terms, based on a measurable scale, it is not fact but opinion.

Metaphysical Claims

These are statements about the nature of reality, beyond physical reality. They differ from observational claims because they cannot be tested with sense perception and measured. They can have large numbers of people believing them but cannot be proved true or false by our truth tests.

IA Prompts

The IA prompts are a set of 35 high-level knowledge questions that will form the basis of the Exhibition TOK assessment.

1. What counts as knowledge?
2. Are some types of knowledge more useful than others?
3. What features of knowledge have an impact on its reliability?
4. On what grounds might we doubt a claim?
5. What counts as good evidence for a claim?
6. How does the way that we organize or classify knowledge affect what we know?
7. What are the implications of having, or not having, knowledge?
8. To what extent is certainty attainable?
9. Are some types of knowledge less open to interpretation than others?
10. What challenges are raised by the dissemination and/or communication of knowledge?
11. Can new knowledge change established values or beliefs?
12. Is bias inevitable in the production of knowledge?
13. How can we know that current knowledge is an improvement upon past knowledge?
14. Does some knowledge belong only to particular communities of knowers?
15. What constraints are there on the pursuit of knowledge?
16. Should some knowledge not be sought on ethical grounds?
17. Why do we seek knowledge?
18. Are some things unknowable?
19. What counts as a good justification for a claim?
20. What is the relationship between personal experience and knowledge?
21. What is the relationship between knowledge and culture?
22. What role do experts play in influencing our consumption or acquisition of knowledge?
23. How important are material tools in the production or acquisition of knowledge?
24. How might the context in which knowledge is presented influence whether it is accepted or rejected?
25. How can we distinguish between knowledge, belief and opinion?
26. Does our knowledge depend on our interactions with other knowers?
27. Does all knowledge impose ethical obligations on those who know it?
28. To what extent is objectivity possible in the production or acquisition of knowledge?
29. Who owns knowledge?
30. What role does imagination play in producing knowledge about the world?
31. How can we judge when evidence is adequate?
32. What makes a good explanation?
33. How is current knowledge shaped by its historical development?
34. In what ways do our values affect our acquisition of knowledge?
35. In what ways do values affect the production of knowledge?